

# PRESS RELEASE

## Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

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### **Conyers faults Bush on Funding for Social Needs, Election Reform, and Violence Against Women**

“Yet again, the President submits a budget that fails to address the needs of the American people. On the critical issue of election reform, we have a case of too little, too late. He also gives short shrift to the programs that have cut violence against women, provided legal services to those most in need, and ensured that the Federal government shares the burden of keeping criminals behind bars. I hope the Congress will not be as myopic as the White House and will continue to fund the programs that matter.

“In terms of election reform, I am happy to see the President has finally seen fit to mention the foremost civil rights issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in his budget. The problem is he not only provides less funds than are necessary to actually replace the equipment that caused the embarrassment of the 2000 election, he offers us no guidance whatsoever regarding whether the federal government should take the lead in insisting on minimum standards for election rights. This is not leadership, its abdication.

“I am also shocked at the degree of indifference the President displays toward Social Security, Medicare, prescription drugs for seniors, and job training. These are the ‘kitchen table’ issues the people of Michigan care about, yet his budget diverts all of the Medicare surplus and \$1.5 trillion of the Social Security budget for the next ten years. He also would cut job training by nearly \$700 million next year alone. This is not good news for the people of Michigan hard hit by the recession.

“As for the rest of the president’s budget as it relates to the Judiciary Committee, it is clear to me that the President’s so-called compassionate conservatism apparently doesn’t apply to female victims of violence. He proposes cutting money for the very Violence Against Women programs, such as STOP grants and rural enforcement, that women’s groups have cited as a cause of steady decline in intimate partner violence against women since 1993.

“I am also disappointed that the budget fails to take full and due account of the Legal Services Corporation by recommending only \$329 million, the same as last year. The 213 legal aid programs that the LSC funds assist individuals on a range of critical issues including unemployment, access to health care, enforcing housing laws against discrimination toward families with children, child custody matters, and representing battered women seeking protection from abusive spouses. Unfortunately, the recession we are in may have increased the number of people needing Legal Services assistance, and the President has turned the government’s back on them.

“I am also concerned that the President’s budget places the entire burden of immigration law enforcement on to the states by eliminating the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, making states foot the entire bill for the incarceration of criminal aliens.”